

A Vision For Your City: Museokatu, Helsinki

Helsinki is the northernmost city in the world with a population of over 1 million (in the Metropolitan Area). Because of this latitude, the climate in Helsinki is slightly more extreme than that of similar sized cities.

The summers here are mild, with long day, and the winters are conversely very cold, with long nights. During the summer, the streets are filled with people at almost all times, as people enjoy their long summer holidays and make the most of the weather, however during the winter there are rarely people on the streets, with people just leaving buildings to get from a to b. This contrast is something I would like to investigate.

Helsinki city centre has a large amount of shopping malls, which provide the opportunity to shop away from the harshness of the climate. Something that I have noticed is the absence of a main shopping high street, with the closest one being Aleksanterinkatu, which in my opinion does not qualify as a proper shopping street as it is not fully pedestrianised, with grade seperated tram lines and a distinct lack of variety in shops compared to the malls.

My idea is based on the classical idea of a shopping arcade, or covered street. Mainly inspired by Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, in Milan, Italy, and the bazaars of the middle east, I wish to make a shopping street to suit and shelter people from the extreme climes of the north. The street I have chosen is Museokatu, as it is a fairly long street with a low amount of car traffic, has a large amount of street facing shop stock, and has a traditional Helsinki type style.

My proposal is over 3 pages, consisting of existing examples of similar ideas, the Museokatu area, and finally a sketch and mock-up of my idea. I hope you enjoy.

Kevan Murtagh.

Examples of Similar Constructions

King's Cross Station Concourse. London, UK.

The new concourse of King's Cross Station was created by placing a domed structure in between two previous buildings, creating a whole new public space. The way in which this is reused is a clever and resourceful way of using space.



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II Milan, Italy.

A precursor to the shopping mall, The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II is a sheltered shopping area created from the attachment of a glass and iron roof to an intersection of prestanding buildings. It is very similar to what I would like to achieve with my idea with the difference being that the roof would not be attached so high.

Vakil Bazaar. Shiraz, Iran.

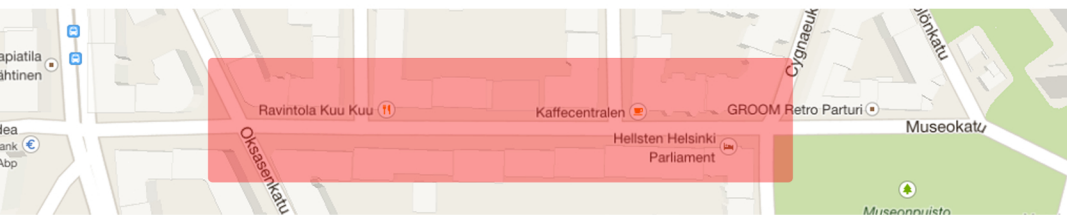
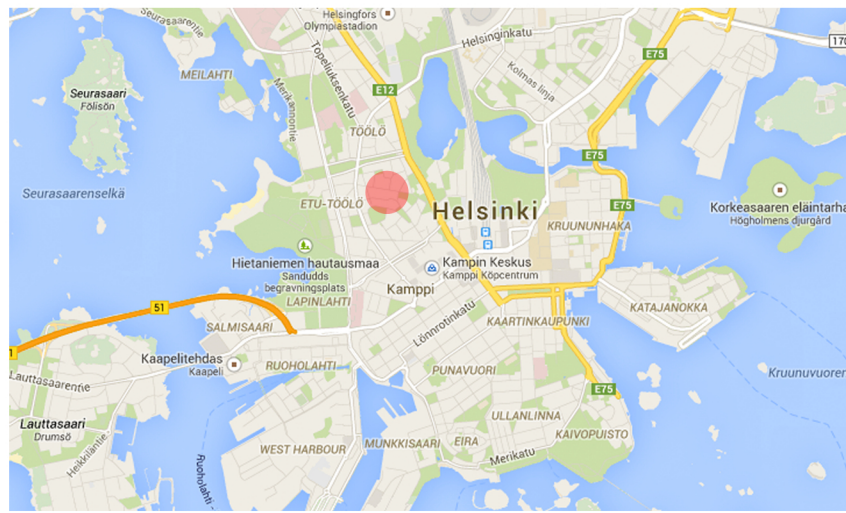
Bazaars are built in the middle east to protect users from the harsh sunlight and heat. My idea hopes to shelter users from the similarly harsh Finnish winter.



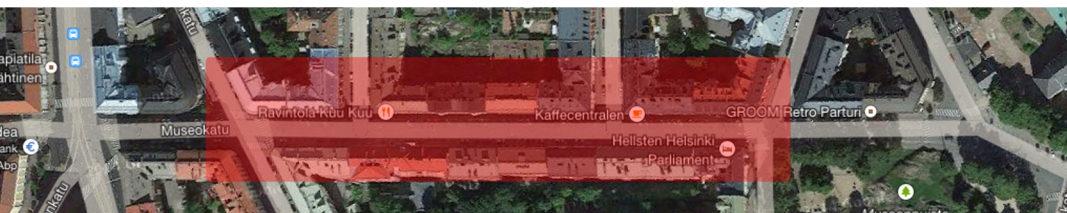
Museokatu Today

The following details
Museokatu as it is today.

Map on right:
Location within Helsinki (Circle)



Museokatu area map
and satellite image.
(Top & bottom
respectively).



As the map shows,
there are two
intersections along the
proposed route, meaning
there will be a total of
four entrances to the
proposed covering.



East entrance (left), and west entrance (right).

As the roads are currently in use for cars, it will have to be pedestrianised.
Service roads will have to be investigated, however no areas would be cut off if
this plan were to go ahead.

Museokatu Proposal Sketch and Mock-up

Right: sketch of west end of covered Museokatu. Below: Mock-up of the east end of the street with proposed covering

I have purposely made the roof low on the outside walkways to allow light into the apartments above. The structure will be made of glass and steel which will also allow a lot of light onto the street below.

Street will be fully pedestrianised, with an open area in the centre arch, and walkways along the edges.



I hope that this proposal would provide an exciting new attraction to the city, while retaining the character of the street, and provide an experience in between the mall and the high street while protecting its users from the harsh winter climate, and hopefully encouraging people to leave the comfort of their homes during winter time.